

Student Loan Fund

March 7, 2022

Date of Hearing March 8, 2022

Name of Bill: [S.B. NO.17 - An Act Prohibiting an Institution of Higher Education from Withholding Transcripts.](#)

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

Dear members of the Joint Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee,

I am writing in support of [S.B. NO.17 - An Act Prohibiting an Institution of Higher Education from Withholding Transcripts.](#) Withholding transcripts prevents students from registering for classes, transferring credits, and obtaining employment. In my role as a member of the Student Loan Fund Borrowers Collective I have learned through the stories of many borrowers like me that, Colleges and universities use the practice of withholding transcripts (transcript ransom) as a debt collection measure.

These debts are usually under \$5,000 and are typically the result of last-minute graduation fees, room and board, lab fees, and other university costs. As you might imagine, this practice disproportionately harms low-income students, students of color, and first-generation students. Transcript ransom penalizes those without financial resources for doing exactly what we as a society have told them to do - going to college. Canceling institutional debt is an allowable use for HEERF and ARP funds. Colleges and universities could cancel all institutional debt if they so desired; they should not be holding students and alumni hostage for these debts.

As a public services worker who has 107 thousand dollars in student debt, I understand the detrimental effects and burdens of student loan debt.

We need to take action on this issue and you have the opportunity to do so today. I ask that you center Connecticut students and graduates and support SB. NO.17 to protect and support us. I commend the committee for introducing such a necessary bill. We are especially grateful for the leadership of Senator Lesser, Representatives Turco, Paris and Kavros Degraw on student debt related issues.

Thank you for your time.

Marina Rodriguez
Student Loan Fund Member